



MEDIA RELEASE

Emergency Management Agency

Ohio Emergency Management Agency • Nancy J. Dragani, Executive Director
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OHIO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY OPENS SUPPORT HOT LINE

Staff Available to Answer Questions, Assist Residents While SBA Assessment Continues

COLUMBUS, OH- The Ohio Emergency Management Agency (Ohio EMA) opened a hot line at noon today to assist residents impacted by the severe storms, tornado and high winds that impacted Ohio last week. The hot line (1-800-545-0553) will remain open until 6 p.m. today and then will re-open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) is in Athens County today (Thursday) to survey the damages. Should a declaration be made by SBA, low interest loans will be made available for Athens and its contiguous counties.

"Ohio EMA is exploring every possible option for providing assistance to those impacted by these storms," said Ohio Department of Public Safety Director Thomas J. Stickrath. "Our staff will closely monitor the progression of the Small Business Administration declaration and will administer the State Supplemental Assistance as efficiently as possible."

Governor Strickland's request for \$1.6 million in State Supplemental Assistance for the hardest hit areas of Athens, Meigs and Perry counties will go before the state Controlling Board Monday for approval.

If there is a SBA disaster declaration issued, Ohio EMA personnel will co-locate at an outreach center to accept applications for State Supplemental Assistance from those who do not qualify for an SBA loan.

The State Supplemental Assistance is intended for uninsured homeowners and renters for eligible real property and personal property damages or losses. This is in addition to the state resources that have been supporting impacted counties since the time of the storms last Thursday.

"We have a long history of working with the local leaders in southeast Ohio and we appreciate their ability to manage and respond to disasters," said Ohio EMA Executive Director Nancy Dragani. "As always, our local partners have stepped up to the plate to support their citizens and we stand ready to continue to assist them."

In response to this event, last week, the State Operations Center opened the assessment room and began damage assessment and monitoring immediately. The Ohio Department of Transportation cleared state highways, and the Ohio State Highway Patrol assisted local law enforcement with safety and security by supplying units that assisted with traffic and crowd control. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency provided technical assistance during clean up efforts after a transformer was knocked down by winds. The Ohio Emergency Management Agency (Ohio EMA) supported local authorities as the Region 4 Collapse Search and Rescue Team began assembling in "stand by" mode. Ohio EMA also coordinated the request of more than 200 tarps through the Red Cross to the impacted communities. State resources remain available for any continuing needs.

For more information on the State Supplemental Assistance Program, visit the Ohio Emergency Management Agency Web site at www.ema.ohio.gov.

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